

**The Georgia
Division of Family and Children Services**



**Marketing, PR Stylebook,
and Policy Guide**

FY 2016

Updated 10.1.15

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Georgia Division of Family and Children Services Marketing, PR Stylebook and Policy Guide

(Updated: 10/2015)

Consistency means adhering to the same principles or form. At the Georgia Division of Family and Children Services (DFCS), consistency will play a major role in the way we communicate with – and present ourselves to – the public.

To be consistent, DFCS has established the *Georgia Division of Family and Children Services Marketing, PR Stylebook, and Policy Guide*, designed to reinforce our image across the agency. This key marketing tool contains information on style issues and policy guidelines unique to DFCS communications and marketing materials. It will help DFCS build a shared identification and commitment as part of the overall branding strategy. It also contains reminders on words often misspelled or misused.

In accordance with the AP Stylebook, the reference dictionary of record is Webster's New World College Dictionary. While most other dictionaries conform, there are some important differences. Webster's New World is the standard. As with style of any kind, amendments are as certain as change itself.

Please let the DFCS Office of Communications team know if you have entries or updates to suggest.

We suggest that any style question not addressed here should be directed to our Office.

Should you have any questions regarding the use of this manual, please contact:

- Susan Boatwright, Susan.Boatwright@dhs.ga.gov, Director
- Mary Beth Lukich, MaryBeth.Lukich@dhs.ga.gov, OFI Chief Information Officer

Sincerely,
DFCS Office of Communications

* * *

INTRODUCTION

What is Branding?

Branding creates specific, positive impressions about DFCS, ensuring that the public clearly understands the specific qualities and attributes of the agency. Branding also helps to orchestrate the delivery of a consistent look (visual), feel (emotional) and message (intellectual) across all channels of communication.

Why is Branding Important?

The public forms strong expectations, emotions and preferences based on branding. Today, branding is somewhat inherent in tangible products, but services can be intangible products without color, shape or texture. Effective branding can supplant the absence of physical properties, creating a positive impression that makes certain the DFCS audience understands the agency's positioning.

What is Brand Identity?

Brand identity is the specific set of tools that DFCS staff use to deliver consistent messages to the public. DFCS brand identity includes standards for use of the agency logo, programs, divisions, type fonts, and colors in print and electronic media. All DFCS staff are responsible for maintaining the brand identity. The information in this guide is for reference should there be any questions regarding proper use.

What are the Graphics Standards?

Graphics Standards are a set of rules that define the proper use of graphic elements within the DFCS brand identity. The graphic standards presented within this document are both a support resource and a reference guide. There are many visual examples of the proper use of DFCS fonts, agency logo and approved colors.

What is the Importance of Maintaining Graphics Standards?

Consistency, consistency, consistency. It is vital to our organization that ALL DFCS staff use consistent messaging and visual communications. The market is bombarded with millions of images and messages daily. It is imperative that DFCS look, feel and sound the same ALWAYS.

How Maintaining Graphics Standards Affects Branding?

An effective brand identity – one that adds value to DFCS services and influences health consumers' decisions – is carefully maintained. A concerted effort to uphold the DFCS brand across the entire agency sends a message to the public of unity and a common sense of purpose. Please take a moment to become familiar with the principles and standards within the pages of this guide and review them whenever a question of proper graphic use arises.

AGENCY BRANDING

Agency Mark

Every day, DFCS staff communicates hundreds of visual impressions through correspondence, press releases, literature, signage, brochures and electronic communications. By applying consistent design principles and using discipline, DFCS creates positive visual impressions and reinforces the DFCS brand.

The following guidelines address how employees should use DFCS logos, program names and templates, and provide best practices for representing DFCS in communications.

DFCS Name

In print, DFCS should always appear in Initial Caps. The first reference to DFCS in any document should be Georgia Division of Family and Children Services (DFCS). Every subsequent reference to the agency name then can be DFCS. Or you may refer to DFCS as “the Division.” Staff are encouraged to state the words “Family and Children Services” whenever possible to reinforce the purpose of our work.

DFCS Logo

The DFCS logo – or graphical treatment of the DFCS brand – is an important asset to the agency. Correct presentation of the logo protects the agency’s investment in the DFCS brand, provides for a consistent representation of the brand and reinforces a positive and professional impression of the agency. The logo can only appear in the below formats.



DFCS uses the
State Seal of Georgia:
Black & White

Division Names

All county offices and departments within DFCS must use the Division logo. Always use the full name on the first reference; all subsequent references can be the acronym (DFCS). Writing out the name will ensure that the public understands that the emphasis is on Families and Children.

Division Logos

The division logos can be used within communication pieces.

Logo Clearance

Correct placement of the DFCS logo (or any program logo) improves the visibility of the logo on each printed piece. Every logo should always have a minimum of 1/16" clearance space on all sides.

DFCS Logo Sizing

To size proportionally, click once on the logo file after inserting into a document, and then extend any corner tabs indicated below.

Correct Logo Sizing vs. Incorrect Logo Sizing

Alternately, you can indicate the exact, desired size of the logo file by right-clicking once on the logo file, selecting "Format Picture" from the pull-down menu, and going to the "Size" tab. Enter the desired width or length and be sure to check the boxes titled "Lock aspect ratio" and "Relative to the original picture size." Select "Enter" and the logo graphic will size proportionally.

Logo Recommendations and Graphic Formats

Recommended use for each file types is as follows:

.GIF (graphic interchange format) format

- Any Internet use
- Sometimes used in Macromedia Flash®
- Sometimes used in PowerPoint®
- Best for online use of illustrations (such as our logo)

.TIF (tagged image file format) format

- Offset printing (cmyk/4-color process)
- Digital printing (cmyk/4-color process)
- Tradeshow media or large format printing
- Advertisements (cmyk/4-color process)
- Other printed media

.EPS (encapsulated PostScript format) format (created with Adobe Illustrator®)

- T-shirts, mugs, apparel, novelty items, etc.
- Offset printing (spot color or cmyk/4-color)
- Digital printing (spot color or cmyk/4-color)
- Advertisements (spot color or cmyk/4-color)
- Macromedia Flash® (preferred format)
- Tradeshows or large format (preferred)
- Signage, outdoor banners, etc.

.JPEG format

- All Internet use
- Macromedia Flash®
- PowerPoint®, Word®, Excel®
- Multimedia and CD-Roms
- Other on-screen, low-resolution usage
- Best for use online with photos of people

.BMP (bitmap format) format

- PowerPoint®, Word®, Excel®
- Multimedia and CD-Roms
- Other on-screen, low-resolution usage

.PSD format (Layered format created with Adobe PhotoShop®)

- Use for editing or re-touching

AGENCY FONT

DFCS Fonts

The official DFCS font for all formal communications* on DFCS letterhead is Arial (exception is made for letters from the Commissioner). The Arial font is a commercially available sans serif typeface that displays consistently worldwide. Please use the Arial font in all of your formal communications in body copy, headers, footers, titles, etc. We do not recommend the use of multiple fonts in a document.

Arial ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ
abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyz 123456789\$¢£&!?:;,,

Arial Italic ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ
abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyz 123456789\$¢£&!?:;,,

Arial Bold ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ
abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyz 123456789\$¢£&!?:;,,

Arial Bold Italic ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ
abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyz 123456789\$¢£&!?:;,,

*Formal Communications refer to all written correspondence on DFCS letterhead, such as Press Releases, memos or formal letters. THIS DOES NOT APPLY TO MARKETING PIECES CREATED FOR PROGRAMS OR CAMPAIGNS.

E-MAIL COMMUNICATION

E-mail is a primary source of communication for DFCS. Therefore, we must ensure that we are using this tool most effectively. Here are some guidelines to follow when creating an e-mail:

1. Always remain professional in your written correspondence. Remember that e-mails are easily forwarded, can be read by anyone and may be subject to open records requests.
2. Do not use any Outlook backgrounds on professional DFCS e-mails. This sometimes hinders the ability to read the e-mails, and is not appropriate for a business environment.
3. Always make sure your Subject Line is clear and directly related to the topic of the e-mail. This also makes it easier to search for an e-mail in Outlook at a later date.
4. Please ensure that all font is at least 10 point and in black. Please do not use any cursive font or font that may be hard to read.
5. Please use caution when using the “reply all” function. Does the e-mail response really apply to everyone?

6. Also, prior to sending your e-mail, ensure that it is going to the party intended. It is very easy to hit “reply” when you really meant to hit “forward”.
7. Keep your e-mails brief and to the point.
8. Avoid sending acknowledgement e-mails if it is not truly needed (such as one-word emails, i.e.: “thanks”). If you are sending an e-mail and no reply is needed, you can state so in your e-mail. This can avoid unnecessary e-mails in your inbox.
9. Only tag e-mails as “high-importance” if they are truly highly important.
10. Respond promptly to all incoming e-mails. This will reduce the likelihood of getting repeat e-mails.
11. Everyone should have a professional e-mail signature. It should include Name, Title, Section, Location, and contact information (phone and fax). This is extremely important as the recipient needs to know exactly who is sending the email. Please add this to both internal and external e-mails. Please be mindful when adding personal quotes, and always consider their appropriateness in the business environment.

DIVISION DIRECTOR’S CORRESPONDENCE

Please note that if you are creating correspondence for the Division Director’s signature, you are to follow the guideline outlined here.

All letters for the Director’s signature must be approved by the Director.

Font

Letters should be typed in Arial with a type size of 12.

Format

All letters are to be typed in the modified block style with NO paragraph indention and no right margin justification. Use no less than one-inch left and right margins.

Date

The date should begin approximately three inches from the top and should be typed to the left of the center.

Inside Address

Placement of the inside address depends on the length of the letter, usually four to

five lines below the date line. Use your judgment about adding lines before the date line and before the inside address so that the letter will be centered as much as possible on the page.

Always use appropriate titles (Dr., Mr., Ms., Honorable, The Honorable) in the inside address. If any academic degree follows the person's name, omit titles before the name. (Example: Joe Smith, M.D., not Dr. Joe Smith, M.D.)

GUIDELINES FOR DIRECTOR'S CORRESPONDENCE

The following are examples of preferred styles of addressing elected officials: The

Honorable Joe Smith
United States Senate
100 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Honorable Joe Smith
Senator, District 1
412 State Capitol
Atlanta, Georgia 30334

Dear Senator Smith:

Dear Senator Smith:

Honorable Jane Smith
Mayor of Santa Claus
Post Office Box 1234
Santa Claus, Georgia 30436

Honorable Jane Smith, Chairman
Toombs County Board of
Commissioners
Post Office Box 112
Lyons, Georgia 30436

Dear Mayor Smith:

Dear Commissioner Smith:

With the exception of street directions (NW, SW, SE, etc.), abbreviations should not be used in the inside address. "Incorporated" may be abbreviated unless it is the company's preference not to do so.

Salutation

Always type a colon after the salutation—not a comma. The salutation is typed a double space (two lines) below the inside address or the attention line.

Dear (title) (last name):

Body of Letter

Always single space the body of the letter, with a double space after the salutation and between paragraphs. Avoid beginning the first sentence of the first paragraph with I. Do not use contractions: don't, can't, I'm, etc.

If acronyms are used, spell it out the first time it is used with the acronym following in parentheses. The acronym can then be used alone in the remainder of the correspondence.

Example: Georgia Division of Family and Children Services (DFCS)

Be consistent. When enclosures are referenced in the body of the letter, be sure to indicate enclosures at the bottom of the letter rather than attachments. Always spell out enclosure or attachment.

Continuation Pages

Attempt to keep correspondence to one page if at all possible. Second and additional pages should be printed on plain white bond. Leave one inch at the top of the second and additional pages. At the left margin, type as follows:

Name Page 2 Date

Leave four spaces between date and body of letter. A paragraph must have at least two lines on the previous page and two lines on the next page. Never use a second page to type the closing section of a letter only. Never end a page with a hyphenated word.

Complimentary closing

“Sincerely” should be aligned with the date and a double space below the last line of the body of the letter with the Commissioner’s name four lines below the closing line, as follows:

Sincerely,

Bobby D. Cagle
Director

Reference Initials, Enclosure/Attachment, and Copy Notations

Type reference initials on all correspondence for the Commissioner’s signature.

Enclosure(s) or Attachment(s) notation should be typed after the reference initials, either on the line below or a double space below, depending on the length of the letter.

Always use appropriate titles in the copy notations that are typed below the enclosure/attachment notation or reference initials.

Example:

cc: Governor Nathan Deal
Dr. Jane Doe

SAMPLE LETTER
(Place on Agency Letterhead)

January 1, 2015

Mr. John Hancock Treasurer
XYZ Corporation 1234 Main Street
Atlanta, Georgia 30000

Dear Mr. Hancock:

This is an example of the Modified Block Letter. The date line, complimentary close and signature block are aligned to the left of the center. The inside address, salutation, body of the letter, reference initials, enclosure, attachment and copy notations are aligned flush left.

The paragraphs are typed single-space and double-spaced between paragraphs. Continuation sheets should contain at least two message lines, and the last word on a sheet should never be divided. The heading for a continuation sheet begins one inch from the top edge of the page.

The complimentary close is typed two lines below the last line of the message. Reference initials appear two lines below the last line of the signature block. An enclosure notation is typed one or two lines below the reference initials, and the carbon copy (now often called courtesy copy) notation appears one or two lines below any other notations, depending on the length of the letter.

Sincerely,

Bobby D. Cagle
Director

cp

Enclosures (3)

cc: Dr. John Doe

SAMPLE MEMORANDUM
(Place on Agency Letterhead)

MEMORANDUM

TO: Management Team and Support Staff
FROM: Bobby D. Cagle
Date: January 1, 2015
RE: Guidelines for Director's Correspondence

Memoranda are used to correspond with staff within the Division, with agency heads or staff of other state agencies. The format is block, no right margin justification.

cp

Enclosure

cc:

PROTOCOLS AND TEMPLATES

Communications developed templates and protocols. While it is not our intention to stifle creativity, it is important to use the approved templates and follow protocol in any outgoing communications to ensure maintenance of brand consistency across DFCS.

Approval Process

The Approval Process ensures that all materials, including but not limited to scripts, publications, PSAs, press releases, marketing materials and artwork are approved by the following individuals prior to production (of any type). The following individuals must approve materials in the following order (where applicable):

1. Direct Supervisor
2. Section Director or County Director
3. DFCS Office of Communications

While many programs work with outside entities to create materials, the DFCS Office of Communications is here to assist you in the creation and distribution of these materials. If you would like the DFCS Office of Communications to work with you to create materials, please contact the Director to begin that process.

Susan Boatwright, Director (Susan.Boatwright@dhs.ga.gov; 404 895-9724)

General Publications

The quality of any organization is reflected in the quality of its publications. Each year, DFCS produces brochures, PSAs, manuals, guides, program and marketing materials, and other printed materials. It is important that all DFCS publications appear with the correct logo and identification on them. All publications must go through the approval process. If you have questions regarding that process or would like the DFCS Office of Communications to assist you in the creation of materials, contact the Director to request assistance.

Items to be given away to the general public

Items that are purchased or produced by any DFCS division, office or program for give-away purposes must have approval in writing in advance by the DFCS Office of communications and any items purchased must come from a licensed state vendor. Use of the DFCS logo by any outside organization, business or individual must be approved in advance by the DFCS Office of Communications. This serves to protect the reputation of the Division and the integrity of the logo by ensuring that only approved representations of the Division's logo appear before the public. Monitoring of the logo also ensures the Division is in compliance with state and federal laws.

Advertising

The use of any DFCS name, artwork or logo is prohibited in advertisements that promote non-DFCS entities unless special circumstances warrant it. Special cases

will be considered individually. Advertisement copy, layout and placement must be approved by Legislative Affairs and Communications. This includes broadcast (Internet, television and radio) as well as print.

Associated Use

Written authorization and copy approval must be obtained from the DFCS Office of Communications prior to any activity that would associate the names, divisions/offices with those of any business or organization. This includes any association that indicates support for DFCS or any of its divisions, programs or offices.

The use of the DFCS logo, program artwork or names is strictly prohibited when such use does or will imply endorsement by the Division. The commercial use of the DFCS logo, artwork and words must be approved by the Office of Legislative Affairs and Communications.

DFCS Fact Sheets

The DFCS Office of Communications will work to ensure that existing DFCS fact sheets are current.

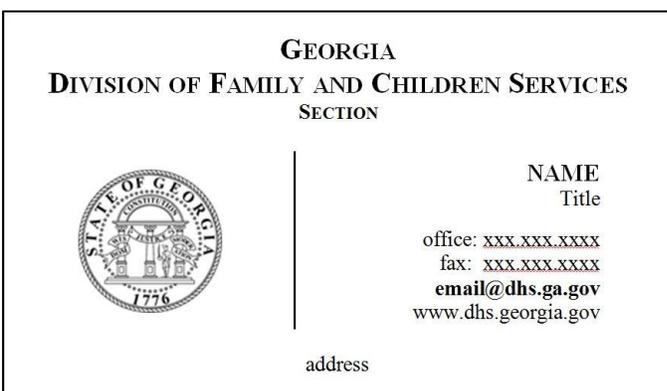
DFCS PowerPoint Template

The official DFCS PowerPoint is the template for all external (to any members of the public) presentations from DFCS staff.

Appropriate graphics can be included within the PPT to customize the presentation for various audiences.

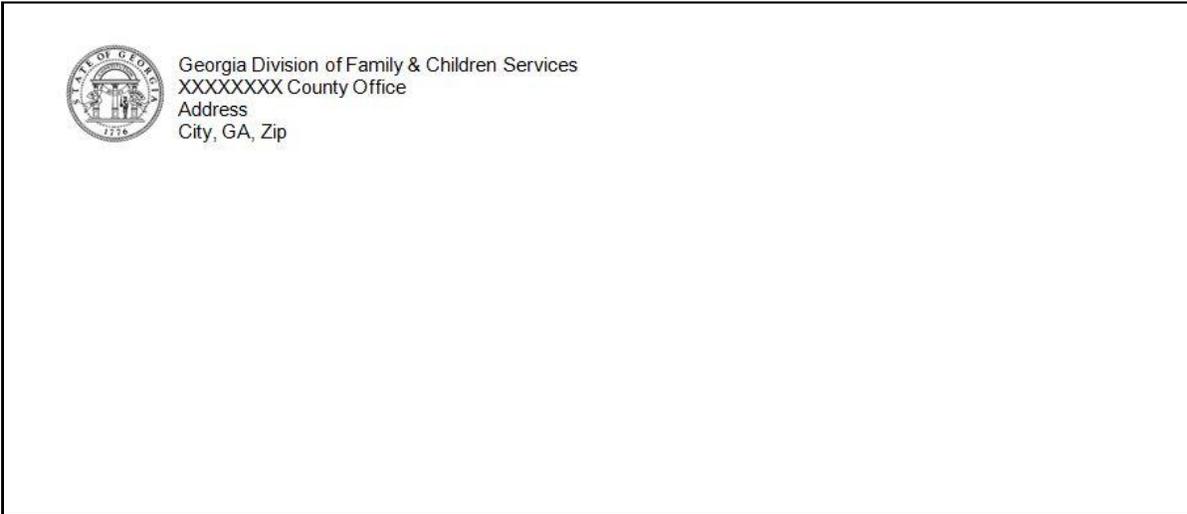
DFCS Business Cards

Business Cards are printed on white only. The logo is in black and white. Offices, programs and divisions are not authorized to create or use business cards that deviate from the below format.



DFCS Envelopes

Envelopes are printed on white only. The logo is in black and white. “Georgia Division of Family and Children Services should appear to the right of the logo with a line under the verbiage. Division/Office name and address are optional and should always be printed in black to the right of the logo and should appear under the line below “Georgia Division of Family and Children Services.” No deviations from this format are allowed. Envelopes may be printed in black & white.



DFCS Letterhead

The layout for all letterhead is shown below.

For DFCS County Letterhead, Regional and/or County Directors may insert their name in the place of the Division Director’s name. No other deviations from this format are authorized. Letterhead may be printed in black & white.

State-Level Letterhead:

Header:



STATE OF GEORGIA
Division of Family and Children Services

Nathan Deal
Governor

Bobby D. Cagle
Director

Footer:

Two Peachtree Street, NW | Suite 19.490 | Atlanta, Georgia 30303 | Telephone: 404-651-8409 | Fax: 404-657-5105

DFCS County-Level Letterhead:

Header:



STATE OF GEORGIA
Division of Family and Children Services

Nathan Deal
Governor

Bobby D. Cagle
Director

Footer:

Name, County Director, XXXX County DFCS, Local Address, Phone and Fax Centered

WEBSITE PROTOCOLS

Approval Process

The Approval Process ensures that all content uploaded to DHS website (which currently houses all DFCS Content) is approved prior to being uploaded and meets the requirements detailed in this guide. This process allows for content to be created and published in a timely manner.

Each county/section is required to follow the internal approval process to ensure that content is vetted by individuals familiar with the subject matter, as well as with individuals familiar with the website structure and functionality.

All forms of content publishing (text, photos, pages, etc.) will be managed by the DHS Office of Legislative Affairs and Communications. This will ensure the continuity that is so important.

The approval process after content is created by an author will be as follows:

1. County Office or Section Designee
2. DFCS Office of Communications
3. Office of Legislative Affairs and Communications

While many programs work with outside entities to create content, the DFCS Office of Communications is here to assist you in the creation of these materials. If you would like the DFCS Office of Communications to work with you to create content, please contact the DFCS Office of Communications. Susan Boatwright, Director (Susan.Boatwright@dhs.ga.gov; 404 895-9724)

How to Request Content Updates

All DFCS Requests should be sent to Mary Beth Lukich for OFI and Susan Boatwright for Child Welfare. When you request updates for website content, updates should be delivered via email in a Word Document. In the Word Document, list the link to the page for which you need the update, then include the content you want removed and added, highlighted red in context. This means that if you want to replace just one sentence in a paragraph, include the whole paragraph with the new highlighted sentence included in it.

If you have video or image content to be included in your update, list it in the document by file name in brackets (e.g. “[photo1.jpg]”) and attach the file to the email request.

If you have hyperlinks you want included in your text, underline the linked text/image and include the link in brackets next to it (e.g. “Click here [www.dhs.georgia.gov]”).

Be sure to format the text as Arial font, 12-point size, and include any “bold” or “italic” text you need along with any bullet points or spacing.

Website Content vs. Employee Intranet Content

The most important thing to keep in mind when creating content for the website and then sending it through the approval process is that the website is intended for use by consumers, and the content therein should be pertinent to that demographic and that demographic only. Any content intended for internal use (such as performance assessment forms, internal memos, current employee forms, notices of standards and procedures, etc.) should be located within the appropriate location on the Employee Intranet. Content suitable for the website includes but is not limited to news releases, contact information, programs and services, applications and forms, general information, notices of service change, calendar and event information, fact sheets, publications, and FAQs. If you have questions about where content should be located, please ask the DFCS Office of Communications Staff.

Page Content

The quality of any organization is reflected in the quality of each page on the agency website. Each day, consumers visit our website looking for information and materials across all pages of our website. It is important that all DFCS content appear with the correct logo and identification on them. All content must meet the required standards detailed in this guide (pertaining to fonts, sizing, graphics, videos, documents, etc.) and go through the aforementioned approval process.

Video Content

Videos to be uploaded to DFCS website must be approved through the internal approval process (outlined above) and be embedded via an external video hosting website (YouTube, Vimeo, etc). Any video content requested for uploading that does not meet this requirement will be sent back.

Documents and Forms

Many divisions utilize documents, reports, applications, and forms to make acquiring

information and services easier for consumers. We encourage the use of this content on the web, but they must meet some standards before they are ready for web use. All document-style content must be in editable format so that the DFCS Office of Communications may make any necessary edits prior to securing the documents for web use. Any revised documents will be sent back for division/office use.

EMPLOYEE INTRANET PROTOCOLS

Approval Process and Content Requirements

The Approval Process ensures that all content to be uploaded to the Employee Intranet is approved by individuals responsible for Employee Intranet content and meets the requirements detailed in this guide prior to being uploaded. This process allows for content to be created and published in a timely manner.

Each county/section is required to follow the internal approval process to ensure that content is vetted by individuals familiar with the subject matter, as well as with individuals familiar with the website structure and functionality.

All forms of content publishing (text, photos, pages, etc.) will be approved by the DHS Office of Legislative Affairs and Communications. This will ensure the continuity that is so important.

The approval process after content is created by an author is the same as the process for the DFCS website and will be as follows:

1. County Office or Section Designee
2. DFCS Office of Communications
3. Office of Legislative Affairs and Communications

The content requirements for the Employee Intranet are also the same as the requirements for agency website. Please refer to the section above for formatting and structure prior to submitting content for approval.

WRITING GUIDELINES

A-A-A

abbreviations and acronyms: Avoid “alphabet soup,” but abbreviations are acceptable if they are already in wide circulation. Consult the AP Stylebook for accepted abbreviations.

For those not found in the stylebook or in Webster’s, use the following rules: In multiple references, **spell out fully on the first use**, followed by the abbreviation in subsequent uses.

AP RULES DO NOT APPLY HERE: In ALL communications FOLLOW an organization’s full name with an abbreviation or an acronym in parentheses.

anticipate/expect: ANTICIPATE means to expect and prepare for something. EXPECT does not include the notion of preparation.

They EXPECT a record crowd.

They have ANTICIPATED it by adding more seats to the auditorium.

approximately: Almost always avoid it and simply say *about*. It is shorter.

B-B-B

bullets: When using bullets to make a list of items, do not use punctuation at the end of each bullet. Only use punctuation on bullets when using complete sentences. This also applies to numbered lists. Do NOT include periods after a sentence fragment when using bullets.

C-C-C

cannot: One word

child care: Two words

compose, comprise, constitute: These words are often used incorrectly. Check your AP Stylebook or dictionary.

Compose: to create or put together. *He composed a song. Europe is composed of many countries.*

Comprise: to contain, to include all or embrace. *Europe comprises many countries.*

Constitute: to form or to make up. *A collection of animals can constitute a zoo.*

D-D-D

datelines: All news releases start with a dateline: CITY, State, Date. For example: GREENVILLE, S.C., Aug. 3, 2005. SMYRNA, GA., March 1, 2005.

Some cities do not need states, like ATLANTA or NEW ORLEANS. Consult your

AP Stylebook for a list of state abbreviations (don’t use postal codes) and states that

are never abbreviated, like Texas and Maine.

Abbreviate months when used with a specific day: Jan. 14. Spell out when using alone, or with a year alone: January 2004.

dimensions: Follow AP Style in all dimensions: *The car is 30 feet long.*

dominate: Never use this word in press releases, white papers or other public documents.

E-E-E

email: No hyphen, per AP Style. Also: ebusiness, emarketing, ecommerce. Note the lowercase letters throughout.

executive biographies: The DFCS Office of Communications maintains the agency's official repository of DFCS biographies and photographs.

F-F-F

Fiscal Year: Capitalize "F" and "Y" followed by a space and all four digits of the year, as in Fiscal Year (FY). May use "FY 2008" on second reference.

G-G-G

Georgia Division of Family and Children Services: Always use the full name *Georgia Division of Family and Children Services (DFCS)* on the first reference. Thereafter you may use *DFCS* or "*the Division.*". The possessive is Georgia Division of Family and Children Services'—with the "s." However, try to avoid the possessive case when possible.

H-H-H

hardcopy: One word, no hyphen. This is different from Webster's.

headlines on news releases: Capitalize the first letter of each main word (see Appendix 1). Obviously, put the main news in the headline; try to be concise yet compelling. Do not sacrifice accuracy for color.

Headlines help to sell our story to reporters and editors. Write headlines that will interest editors and enable them to appraise quickly the story's news value. **If something is referenced in the headline or deck, it needs to be substantiated in the body of the story.**

Also, don't split phrases or complete thoughts over two lines in the headline.

healthcare: One word.

hyphenation: Follow AP Stylebook guidelines with the following clarification from DFCS. Hyphenate a compound modifier EXCEPT in the case of a formal name or if the compound modifier includes an adverb (-ly ending).

EXAMPLE: *This is a constituent-involved approach. However, it is a highly functional program.*

("Multi-" is almost always not hyphenated. See separate entry.)

I-I-I

impacted: Use impacted when you using as an adjective to mean “blockade” or “barrier.” Do NOT use impacted when you mean affected.
She had an IMPACTED wisdom tooth.

inbox: Lowercase i.

Include: Use INCLUDE to introduce a series when the items that follow **ARE ONLY PART of the total.**

The zoo INCLUDES lions and tigers.

Georgia Division of Family and Children Services supports many programs, INCLUDING Child Support Services.

Intranet: Capital I.

Internet: Capital I.

its vs. it’s: You should know this one but it’s easy to miss. By the way, an agency is always singular. Therefore, it is: *The agency issued its annual report,* not *The agency issued their annual report.*

J-J-J

K-K-K

L-L-L

M-M-M

media contacts on news releases: As a general rule, no more than two DFCS media contacts should be listed per release. Each media contact must be available to assist the media on the day of the announcement or be available by cell phone; otherwise, list a different contact. The media contact should always include DFCS’s Deputy Director of Legislative Affairs and Communications, unless he/she is unavailable.

media advisory: They only should be sent out to advise the media of a significant activity: a live webcast, a news conference, an event where they could obtain interviews, observe action, shoot video, etc. In general, media advisories should follow the same style as our news releases but should be short and sweet, providing the “who, what, when, where” in a concise list. See Appendix 2 for suggested format.

months: see dateline

more than: Use instead of “over.” It is AP Style. *Georgia Division of Family and Children Services serves more than 2 million clients per year.*

multi- : The AP rules of prefixes apply, but in general, no hyphen. Some examples:

multibillion, multimillion, multimillionaire, multimillion-dollar deal (note the placement of the hyphen).

N-N-N

new: Avoid using it in a news release. How often do we announce or launch something that is old?

news releases: News releases for distribution over the national wire should be about **400 words or less** (body copy). As a rule, news releases sent to the trade wires should be **650 words or less**.

Body type: 12-pt Arial. 1.5-spaced. EXTRA space between paragraphs. Fully justified. Ends with –XXX

Headline: 16-pt. Arial. Bold. Capitalize first letter of each main word. Properly split over two lines as required.

Sub-headlines: 14-pt. Arial. Italicized. Capitalize first letter of each main word. Properly split over two lines as required. Follow headline style in tone.

none: It usually means “single one.” When used in this sense, it always takes singular verbs and pronouns: *None of the seats was in the right place.* HOWEVER, “none” isn’t always singular. Use a PLURAL verb if the sense is “no two or more” or “no amount.” *None of the taxes have been paid.*

Numbered lists: When using bullets to make a list of items, use punctuation at the end of each bullet when writing in complete sentences. This also applies to bulleted lists. Do NOT include periods after a sentence fragment when using bullets.

numbers: Refer to the AP Stylebook. In summary, spell out one through nine, starting with 10, use figures. Dollar values and statistics use numerals: *\$2 billion deal, 1 million customers, 6 percent, 14 feet tall.*

In a series, follow the same rules: *They had 10 dogs, two cats, and 97 hamsters. They had four four-room houses, 10 three-room houses and 12 10-room houses.* Ranges: Per AP: the form is *\$12 million to \$14 million.* Not: *\$12 to \$14 million.*

O-O-O

online: one word, no hyphen.

on-site: two words, hyphenated, per Webster’s.

Open Enrollment: Always spell out and capitalize when referring to the State Health Benefit Plan’s yearly Open Enrollment.

P-P-P

percent: Acceptable to use the symbol (%) except for all formal communications on DFCS letterhead, including Press Releases and Division memos; always spell out the entire word. Use numerals, even if the numeral is less than 10: *9 percent, 100 percent, 8.5 percent.*

phone numbers: There is no need to add a “1” before a toll-free number; the “1” is understood. In releases, use *800-555-5555*, not *1-800-555-5555*.

punctuation:

bullets: See entry under “bullets.”

commas: Use commas to separate elements in a series, but do not put a comma before the conjunction in a simple series: *The flag is red, white and blue*. Put a comma before the concluding conjunction in a complex series: *I had orange juice, toast, and ham and eggs for breakfast*.

colons: The most frequent use of a colon is at the end of a sentence to introduce lists, tabulations, texts, etc. Capitalize the first word after a colon only if it is a proper noun or the start of a complete sentence: *He promised this: The agency will make good all the losses*. But: *There were three considerations: expense, time and feasibility*.

dash: When using a dash make sure to put a space on both sides of a dash in all uses except the start of a paragraph.

hyphens: Hyphens are joiners. Use them to avoid ambiguity or to form a single idea from two or more words. *The president will speak to small-business men*. *He recovered his health*. *He re-covered the leaky roof*.

Use hyphens when compound modifiers precede a noun, except the adverb *very* and all adverbs that end in *-ly*: *a first-quarter touchdown, a well-known man, a very good time, an easily remembered rule*.

periods: Use ONE space after a period for all communications. Do NOT include periods after a sentence fragment when using bullets.

Q-Q-Q

quotes: We have very few opportunities to “editorialize” in a news release. Quotes from a DFCS spokesperson give us that chance. *So make the quote meaningful, not fluffy...Never use: “We are pleased/delighted/thrilled/excited/look forward to...”*

Try to make the quote conversational, resembling something that a person might actually say to a reporter. A quote is NOT an excuse to use jargon. Keep it tight and bright. In most cases, only one DFCS person should be quoted once in each release.

R-R-R

ranges: Per AP: the form is *\$12 million to \$14 million*. Not: *\$12 to \$14 million*.

redundancies: There are thousands of ways to clutter copy with excessive words. Here are some examples. Look for these types of phrases – and then cut it down.

- at the present time now (or omit altogether)
- with the exception of except
- during the course of during
- in the vicinity of near
- advance warning is there any other kind?
- advance planning the idea of planning backward is intriguing...
- new record again, is there any other kind?
- whether or not “whether” is sufficient
- a variety of several

S-S-S

spell check: Included in all word-processing software. Please use it on every written document.

strategic: Don't use or announce a *strategic partnership*, *strategic agreement*, *strategic relationship*, etc. How often does anyone announce an unstrategic partnership, agreement or relationship? Think twice before you type *strategic*.

statewide: one word

T-T-T

telebusiness, telecoverage, telemarket, telesales: Webster's doesn't hyphenate words like "telecommute" or "teleconference," so we won't hyphenate our "telewords" either.

titles of compositions: Names of books, periodicals, newspapers, TV programs, reports, etc. should be set off from regular body copy quote marks. For example: the NBC-TV "Today" show, "The Washington Post," "The Hard Copy Observer." This does NOT apply to books that are primarily catalogs of reference material (as per AP), such as almanacs, directories, handbooks and similar publications.

titles of people: DFCS is full of titles that we typically need to use in news releases, but try to abbreviate or reword titles to make them more meaningful, if possible. Capitalize the words in the title if it comes after a name, and include "of" and "for." Do not routinely use corporate officer titles in news releases. Do not list every level of the organization that a person belongs to if the group is publicly recognizable—just the most relevant organization.

AP has a very lengthy section on how to treat titles and formal titles. Please review if you have questions.

Also, see separate AP entry on "doctor." In general:

"Dr. may be used on first reference before the names of individuals who hold other types of doctoral degrees (as opposed to health-related doctors). However ... care should be taken to assure that the individual's specialty is stated in first or second reference. Do not use Dr. before the names of individuals who hold only honorary doctorates. Continue the use of Dr. in subsequent references (this is contrary to AP Style)."

trade show: Two words, every time.

U-U-U

United States: Spell out when used as a noun. Use *U.S.* (no space) only as an adjective. The *United States* is a nation...The *U.S. health care system*...

utilize: Never use *-size* words such as *utilize*, and avoid *maximize*, too. *Use* is shorter and means the same thing in almost every case.

V-V-V

Voice: Customers, providers and reporters carefully read every word DFCS releases, and they make judgments on our future based on *what we are saying and writing*.
“Everything you do speaks.” We need to speak with one powerful, clear and consistent voice – “The voice of DFCS.”
Writing and communicating clearly is the right thing to do for our business.

W-W-W

Web: Always capital.

Web addresses: If referencing the DFCS website use: *For more information, visit www.dfcs.dhs.georgia.gov*. That it refers to a website is understood.

website: One word, lowercase w.

X-Y-Z

- ATTACHMENTS:
- DFCS Sample Letter
 - DFCS Sample Memo
 - DFCS Power Point Template
 - DFCS Business Card Template
 - DFCS Envelope – For County Use (jpeg)
 - DFCS Letterhead
 - DFCS County-Level Letterhead
 - State Seal - jpeg